

1954

- The Metro cinema in Mumbai hosted the first-ever *Filmfare* Awards.
- Vyjayanthimala performed the *thillana*.
- Gregory Peck was delayed and couldn't make it. He attended the banquet later.
- Bimal Roy, Dilip Kumar, Naushad and Meena Kumari bagged their first *Filmfare* Awards for *Do Bigha Zamin* (Best Film, Best Director), *Daag* (Best Actor) and *Baiju Bawra* (Best Music Director, Best Actress).

1955

- Morarji Desai was the chief guest.
- The Travancore sisters Padmini, Lalitha and Ragini performed.
- Naushad sportingly went backstage to congratulate S.D. Burman who won the Best Music Director trophy for *Taxi Driver*.
- Meena Kumari won the Best Actress Award again for her sensitive performance in *Parineeta*.

1956

- Bimal Roy scored a hat-trick, winning the Best Director trophy for three consecutive years: *Do Bigha Zamin* (1953), *Parineeta* (1954) and *Biraj Bahu* (1955).

1957

- It was V. Shantaram's year. He won the Best Film and Best Director Awards for *Jhanak Jhanak Payal Baahe*.
- Vyjayantimala refused the Supporting Actress award for *Devdas*, insisting "Mine wasn't a supporting role."
- Motilal, who won the Best Supporting Actor for *Devdas*, had some words of wisdom though. "Most people seem to have the idea that a supporting role is something unimportant and not worth bothering about. Supporting, my foot!"

1958

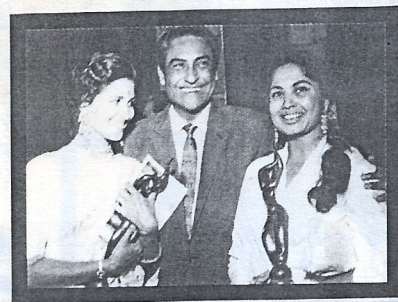
- *Mother India* stormed its way through, winning trophies for Nargis and Mehboob Khan in 1957 (Best Film, Best Director, Best Actress). YB Chavan, the chief guest, handed over the trophy to Nargis.
- Dilip Kumar scored a hat-trick this time with his Best Actor trophies (*Azaad*, 1955, *Devdas*, 1956, *Naya Daur*, 1957).

1959

- Vyjayathimala finally made peace and happily accepted the Best Actress trophy for *Sadhna*. She also presented a brilliant Bharata Natyam recital at the show.
- Dev Anand won his first award (Best Actor, *Kaala Paani*).

1960

- Raj Kapoor won the Best Actor trophy for *Anari*. A room at the RK cottage was eventually dedicated to his trophies. "This is no ordinary room. It haunts me because each time I enter, it places an invisible but distinct burden of responsibility on me. Even now, as I'm about to open the door again and come out, the walls, the trophies, the memories begin to whisper — and



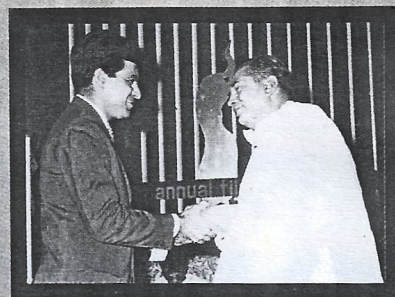
Shashikala, Ashok Kumar and Meena Kumari



Yashwantrao Chavan with Nargis



Waheeda Rahman with Raj Kapoor



Dilip Kumar with Bimal Roy



Raj Kapoor with Rajesh Khanna



Sharmila Tagore with Shatrughan Sinha and Asrani



Rajesh Khanna with Sharmila Tagore



Amitabh Bachchan with Shatrughan Sinha



A.B. Vajpayee



Nutan with Amitabh Bachchan

merge into a great montage of whispering. And the voices say: 'What next, Raj Kapoor? What next?' "

1961

■ K. Asif's grand extravaganza *Mughal-e-Azam* fetched him the Best Film trophy but he lost the director's trophy to Bimal Roy, who scored his second hat-trick (*Madhumati*, 1958, *Sujata*, 1959, *Parakh*, 1960).

1962

■ Raj Kapoor's *Jis Desh Mein Ganga Behti Hai* fetched him the Best Film and the Best Actor trophies.

■ B.R. Chopra was declared the Best Director for his gripping murder mystery *Kanoon*.

1963

■ Dancing star Helen made her debut on stage with a fast-swinging cabaret number.

■ Meena Kumari recited a Faiz poem in her inimitable passionate voice. She was also adjudged the Best Actress for her performance in *Sahib Bibi Aur Ghulam*.

1964

■ Bimal Roy forced Nutan out of her semi-retirement to offer her Kalyani's role in *Bandini*. Not surprisingly, the film won her the Best Actress award.

■ None other than Jayalalitha, the up-and-coming dancer-actress as she was described then, performed a Bharata Natyam number at the show!

1965

■ *Dosti* was adjudged the Best Film. The film also brought to the forefront the winning talented duo Laxmikant-Pyarelal (Best Music).

■ The finalists of the Filmfare-United Producers Talent Contest were presented on stage. Among them were Jatin (yes, Rajesh Khanna) Khanna and Subhash Ghai! Among the junior discoveries was Sarika.

1966

■ Chief guest Tony Randall had the audience in splits with his humorous and entertaining speech. Later, he handed over the Best Actress trophy to Meena Kumari for *Kaajal*.

1967

■ *Guide* swept the top four awards for Vijay Anand, Dev Anand and Waheeda Rahman (Best Film, Best Director, Best Actor, Best Actress).

1968

■ Sunil Dutt sportingly threw a bash for the winners though he lost the Best Actor Award (*Milan*) to Dilip Kumar (*Ram Aur Shyam*). Dilip Kumar, Nutan, Manoj Kumar, Pran, Om Prakash and Pran arrived in full spirits despite the short notice.

■ Sohrab Modi remarked: "I hope I shall live another 10 years

to see this function.”

1969

- Shammi Kapoor took home his first Best Actor trophy for *Brahmachari*.
- Newcomer Hema Malini performed a Mohini Attam item.

1970

- Chief guest Satyajit Ray handed over the Best Actress trophy to his discovery Sharmila Tagore for *Aradhana*.
- Yash Chopra received the Best Director Award (*Ittefaq*, 1969).
- Subhash Ghai's acting bug was in evidence. He presented a skit directed by Deven Varma!

1971

- Sanjeev Kumar huffed when he did not win the Best Actor award for *Khilona*. Incidentally, Mumtaz won the Best Actress trophy for the same film! Hmmm.
- Nine out of 12 *Filmfare* Award winners that year were newcomers. Rajesh Khanna was the Best Actor (*Saccha Jhuta*).

1972

- General S.H.F.J. Manekshaw presided over the function.
- *Anand* won the Best Film, Best Supporting Actor and Best Actor awards for Hrishikesh Mukherjee, Amitabh Bachchan and Rajesh Khanna respectively. Shatrughan Sinha, a contender himself, handed over Amitabh's trophy!

1973

- The controversial year in which Pran turned down his trophy for Best Supporting Actor. He argued that Ghulam Mohammed's score in *Pakeezah* was better than Shanker-Jaikishen's in *Be-Imaan*.
- Hema Malini won her first Best Actress trophy (*Seeta Aur Geeta*).
- *Be-Imaan* also won the Best Film Award, beating *Pakeezah* and *Anubhav*, and Best Director for Sohanlal Kanwar scoring over Manoj Kumar (*Shor*) and Kamaal Amrohi (*Pakeezah*).

1974

- Backless dresses and plunging necklines were on full display at the function.
- Jaya Bhaduri and newly-married Dimple Kapadia shared the Best Actress trophy for *Abhimaan* and *Bobby*.
- A first of sorts, both Rishi Kapoor and Dimple Kapadia won the trophies for their debut film.

1975

- Jaya Bhaduri burst into tears when Hrishikesh Mukherjee presented her the Best Actress Award for her performance in *Kora Kagaz*.

1976

- A contender himself, Amitabh Bachchan nominated as Best Actor for *Deewar*, handed over the trophy to Sanjeev Kumar for



Zeenat Aman



Naseeruddin Shah with Shabana Azmi



Dimple Kapadia with Jackie Shroff



Dimple Kapadia with Rajesh Khanna



Amir Khan performs with Juhi Chawla

the 'art' filmwallahs were winning all the trophies, and the commercial film folk were always sore losers.

However, 1983 was the year in which the biggies of commercial cinema won the awards—**Dilip Kumar, Raj Kapoor, Shammi Kapoor, Deven Varma, Salim-Javed, R.D. Burman, Kishore Kumar**, along with promising newcomers **Padmini Kolhapure, Supriya Pathak** and **Salma Agha**—and the attendance was on the high side. (The Marathi and Bengali awards were also included, like poor country cousins).

So it was a warm April evening. I remember having excitedly bought an expensive dress and gold sandals for the special evening (my first official awards function), pinned on the huge shiny badge and stood in the foyer keeping **Sarika** company. She was assigned the task of welcoming guests and shooting a couple of questions at them before they went into the hall.

When all the actresses came decked up in shiny Kanjeevarams and jazzy *salwar kameezes*, dripping gold, diamonds and *gajras*, Sarika had the nerve to come in a white cotton skirt-blouse, with a bead necklace around her neck.

Jugal Hansraj had just captured viewers' hearts as the *Masoom* moppet, and he cutely declared that he didn't "hate girls but was very shy of them."

The film had won for first-time director **Shekhar Kapur** the Critics' Award. He was the Next Big Thing then—still is—and **Mahesh Bhatt** was the up-and-coming maverick. Of the directors walking into the function then, only **Yash Chopra** has survived the years in good shape.

Salim-Javed had won the best screenplay award for *Shakti*, but had broken up their glorious partnership by this time. Though they kept up a cordial front, the cold vibes were freezing. Javed had come with then-wife **Honey**, and accepted the trophy from a coyly smiling **Shabana Azmi**, and of course everybody could feel the chemistry between them.

The entire Kapoor clan had come, Raj Kapoor had won the Best Director award for *Prem Rog*, and Shammi Kapoor Best Supporting Actor for *Vidhaata*. **Randhir, Rishi-Neetu, Shashi Kapoor** with **Kunal** (zipping down from the shooting of *Utsav* for a day) had all come to cheer. Randhir good-naturedly grumbled that the function was cutting into his drinking time!

Amjad Khan was the wisecracking master of ceremonies, who ad-libbed with Deven Varma and talked a stage-fright stricken **Raakhee** to hand over the Best Film trophy to **Riaz** (of the Mushir-Riaz duo, producers of *Shakti*).

Of the actresses who were then on their way up the stardom ladder—**Padmini Kolhapure, Poonam Dhillon, Anita Raaj, Swapna, Rameshwari, Anooradha Patel**, Salma Agha, none has had the long career spans of **Asha Parekh, Tanuja, Raakhee**, who were then established actresses. **Dimple Kapadia** hadn't made that miraculous comeback, but had the bearing of a queen. Smita Patil, who walked in daringly alone, died tragically young.

Of the heroes, **Rishi Kapoor, Raj Babbar, Suresh Oberoi, Farouque Shaikh, Kunal Kapoor, Kumar Gaurav**, and a skinny young **Anil Kapoor** rubbed shoulders with the seniors like the Kapoors, **Sunil Dutt** and **Rajendra Kumar**. But Dilip Kumar is still the undisputed star two decades down the line. And Anil Kapoor is still the leading man.

And yes, even the then chief guest Naushad, had the same complaint about the decline of Hindi film music. Thank god, some things never change.

Deepa Gahlot



Versatile veterans: Lata Mangeshkar with Raj Kapoor



Compere: Amjad Khan



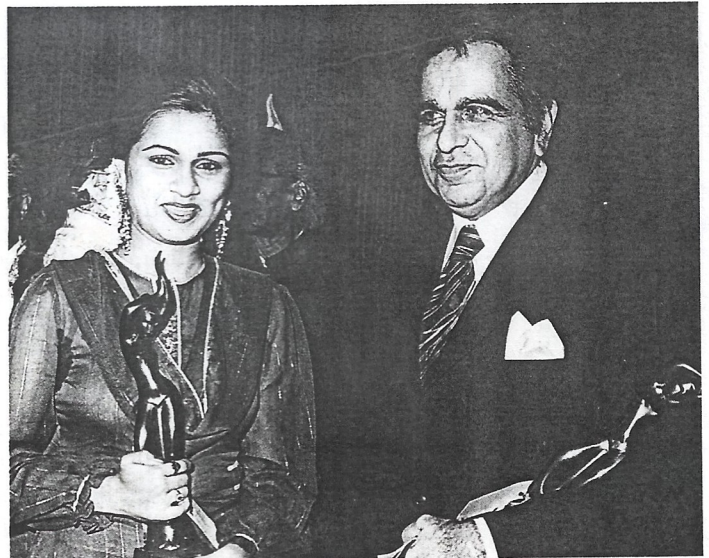
Trendsetter: Sarika

Circa :1983. Those were the days before anyone had heard of Event Management. The venue for the *Filmfare* Awards Nite was the Shanmukhananda Hall (before it burnt down) which would be lit up like a wedding *pandal*.

Stage decoration was a basic affair with flowers, thermocol, satin and glitter done by the Indian National Theatre. Kanti Mehta's AV about previous awards functions was the highlight of the evening. Entertainment meant some songs, an orchestra, folk dances (really!), maybe a starlet doing a classical dance number and a comedian cracking a few jokes.

A politician as a guest of honour, speeches, vote of thanks and then the announcement of the awards. No one could have imagined then that one day the *Filmfare* Awards would have a sponsor, a budget running into eight figures, top stars performing, international acts and nationwide telecast.

Even minus the glamour and high-powered multi-media coverage, and stars staying away if they were not sure of winning, the *Filmfare* Award pass was still a much sought after piece of card paper. I remember having started my report (*Filmfare* June 1-15, 1983) the magazine was a fort-



Winning spree: Padmini Kolhapure and Dilip Kumar

**SOME THINGS
NEVER CHANGE
AT THE
AWARDS...
THANK THE
LORD**

nightly then) with the words, "The pre-Awards function tension slowly reaches its peak. Frayed tempers, near nervous breakdowns, people barging into the office, the phone ringing constantly, in general, everybody going berserk. And a few hours before the function, the biting of nails—will everything go well? Will so-and-so turn up? Will the audience enjoy the programme? Have the celebs got proper seats?"

The situation must be pretty much the same now. And 16 years after I quit *Filmfare*, I'm still badgered for passes by the starstruck: "Surely you have contacts," they demand. I know what the *Filmfare* staffers hate most at the time of the awards—the wheedling, cajoling, insistent, if-you-are-my-friend-you-will-get-me-a-pass phone calls.

Compared to today's razzmatazz, the format of the *Filmfare* Awards then seemed so simple. By the 1980s, the Awards had, kind of, lost the high glamour they used to have in the earlier decades, when stars used to attend in full force and there would be an unofficial competition over which actress was best dressed. And heroes used to get new suits ordered for the evening.

That may have had something to do with the fact that during this period,



Sunny Deol, Madhuri Dixit and Rajkumar Santoshi



Kajol



Madhuri Dixit with M.F. Husain



Shah Rukh Khan and wife Gauri



A.R. Rahman with Asha Bhosle

Aandhi.

■ *Deewar* won Shashi Kapoor and Yash Chopra awards.

1977

■ The then external affairs minister, A.B. Vajpayee presided over the function and sat next to Raj Kapoor, who kept him thoroughly entertained.

■ Vajpayee's speech was laced with much-applauded wit and humour.

1978

■ It was the silver jubilee year of the awards.

■ Amitabh Bachchan won his first Best Actor trophy for *Amar Akbar Anthony*.

■ Newly married couple Kamal Haasan and Vani Ganapathy came straight from their wedding reception. Freshly-married Vinod Mehra and Meena, also attended.

1979

■ Satyajit Ray won his first *Filmfare* Award for *Shatranj Ke Khiladi*.

■ Sachin, Kaajal Kiran, Paintal, Poornima and Mehmood Jr performed a disco dance number.

1980

■ Dilip Kumar, the chief guest, gave a hard-hitting speech.

■ Zeenat Aman, the compere for the show, was at her jokey and jazzy best.

1981

■ It was a tough fight between *Khubsoorat* and *Aakrosh*. *Khubsoorat* got the Best Film and the first Best Actress Award for Rekha. *Aakrosh* won the Best Director (Govind Nihalani), Best Actor (Naseeruddin Shah) and Best Supporting Actor (Om Puri) Awards.

■ Chief guest Sunil Dutt came without Nargis for the first time, since she was ailing. His children Sanjay, Namrata and Priya provided moral support.

1982

■ Poonam Dhillon as compere, Padmini Kolhapure as singer and Deepti Naval as dancer wowed the audience.

■ Rekha won the National Award for *Umrao Jaan* but it was Smita Patil who won the *Filmfare* Best Actress Award for her knock-out performance in *Chakra*.

1983

■ *Shakti* bombed at the box office but won the Best Film Award.

■ R.D. Burman won his first *Filmfare* Award for *Sanam Teri Kasam*.

1984

■ Kid star Jugal Hansraj, fresh from the success of *Masoom*, handed over the Best Director trophy to Govind Nihalani.

■ *Masoom*, *Ardh Satya* and *Arth* vied for the top awards.

■ Meenakshi Seshadri, on the threshold of stardom, presented